

Message Text

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TAGS: ENRG, IN

SUBJ: POWER SUPPLY IN MAHARASHTRA AND GUJARAT

REF: STATE 045667

1. INSTALLED CAPACITY

A. IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO PIN DOWN PRECISELY THE EFFECTIVE INSTALLED ELECTRICAL GENERATING CAPACITY IN WEST INDIA. APPARENTLY A NUMBER OF THE INSTALLATIONS ARE OLD AND OPERATE SPASMODICALLY AND ONLY AT LOW LEVELS OF EFFICIENCY. POWER CUTS HAVE BEEN COMMON IN BOMBAY FOR AT LEAST THE PAST THREE YEARS AND HAVE BEEN IMPOSED ON THE USIS PART OF THE CONSULATE GENERAL'S OPERATION. WHEN LATEST CUT WAS PUT INTO EFFECT IN DECEMBER, THE CONGEN WAS TOLD THAT TOTAL INSTALLED CAPACITY IN MAHARASHTRA AMOUNTED TO 2,900 MW, BUT THAT ONLY 1,700 MW WERE OPERATIONAL AT THAT TIME AND REQUIREMENTS AMOUNTED TO 1,900 MW. ALL OF THE POORLY OPERATING EQUIPMENT IS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, WHICH IS WIDELY CRITICIZED IN BOMBAY WHERE THE TATA GROUP OPERATES A 500 MW THERMO PLANT WHICH HAS BEEN GOING AT CAPACITY THROUGH THE PAST 3-4 MONTHS OF

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SHORTAGE. AS A RESULT OF THE SHORT-FALL, INDUSTRIAL AND COMM-

ERCIAL USERS WERE CUT BACK SUBSTANTIALLY IN DECEMBER AND EARLY JANUARY, BUT SOME RELIEF WAS PROVIDED IN MID-JANUARY WHEN SOME TEXTILE MILLS, WHICH HAD BEEN FORCED TO OPERATE ONLY AT NIGHT, WERE PERMITTED TO RESUME DAYTIME OPERATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, SOME RESTRICTIONS IN THE BOMBAY AREA HAVE CONTINUED AND HAVE HAD A RESTRICTIVE EFFECT ON COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY.

B. A SENIOR OFFICIAL OF THE MAHARASHTRA STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD (MSEB, BOMBAY) NOW TELLS US THAT THE TOTAL RECOGNIZED INSTALLED CAPACITY IN THIS STATE AS OF JANUARY 1, 1976 IS 2,300 MW CONSISTING OF 1,300 MW THERMO, 800 MW HYDRO AND 200 MW NUCLEAR. HE SAYS THAT THE EFFECTIVE POWER GENERATING CAPACITY VARIES FROM 70-80 PER CENT OF INSTALLED CAPACITY DEPENDING ON THE STATUS OF MAINTENANCE OF GENERATORS, SHUT-DOWN THROUGH REPAIRS, AND OTHER DISRUPTIONS IN PRODUCTION. MOREOVER, 15 PER CENT OF GENERATED POWER IS LOST IN TRANSMISSION DUE LARGELY TO THEFT OF POWER IN RURAL AREAS.

C. RECONCILIATION OF THE 2,300 MW FIGURE WITH THE 2,900 MW ESTIMATE SEEMS TO BE AS FOLLOWS: THE LARGER FIGURE INCLUDES AN ADDITIONAL 200 OF NUCLEAR POWER WHICH, ALTHOUGH PHYSICALLY LOCATED IN MAHARASHTRA STATE, IS NOW ALLOCATED TO GUJARAT BECAUSE ITS TOTAL OUTPUT GOES TO THAT STATE. 400 MW HAS BEEN SCRATCHED AS BEING SO OLD AND OBSOLETE THAT IT IS SO SELDOM OPERATIONA AS NOT TO BE WORTH COUNTING.

D. INFORMATION ON GUJARAT IS NOT READILY AVAILABLE INBOMBAY AND WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT WORTH WHILE TO MAKE A TELEPHONE INQUIRY BECAUSE OF THE TENSE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THAT STATE. OUR INQUIRE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE MISREPRESENTED. WE ARE TOLD BY SOURCES IN MAHARASHTRA THROUGH THAT THE INSTALLED CAPACITY THERE AS OF JANUARY 1, 1976 IS 1,375 MW CONSISTING OF 950 MW THERMO, 225 MW HYDRO AND 200 NUCLEAR (THE LATTER IS THE GUJARAT SHARE OF THE TWIN TARAPUR REACTORS). THESE ESTIMAGES ARE CERTAINLY SUBJECT TO A FAIR MARGIN OF ERROR AS THE BOMBAY FINANCIAL EXPRESS OF NOVEMBER 13, 1975 QUORED THE GUJARAT STATE MINISTER, B.J. PATEL, AS STATING THE AHMEDABAD THAT INSTALLED CAPACITY THERE IS 1,436 MW.

E. UNTIL LAST WEEK GUJARAT HAD GOTTEN THROUGH MOST OF THE DRY SEASON WITH ONLY MINIMAL POWER SHORTAGES. HOWEVER, LAST WEEK SEVERE RESTRICTIONS WERE PUT INTO EFFECT CALLING FOR CUTS IN SOME SECTORS OF 20 PER CENT WITH MOST USERS SUBJECT TO A 5 PERCENT REDUCTION.

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2. TARAPUR

A. ONE-HALF OF TARAPUR'S OUTPUT IS ALLOCATED TO THE STATE OF MAHARASHTRA AND THE OTHER HALF IS ALLOCATED TO GUJARAT. BOTH STATES HAVE INTRA-STATE GRIDS WHICH ARE CONNECTED THROUGH THE TARAPUR TIE-UP. IN PAST YEARS GUJARAT HAS NOT NEEDED ITS FULL SHARE OF TARAPUR POWER AND HAS PERMITTED MAHARASHTRA TO DRAW MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF THE POWER FROM THAT INSTALLATION. AT

PRESENT, HOWEVER, GUJARAT IS TAKING ITS FULL 50 PERCENT SHARE. ON FEBRUARY 19, CHAIRMAN SETHNA TOLD THE CONSULATE GENERAL THAT TARAPUR'S TWIN REACTORS WERE OPERATING AT 190 MW AND 160 MW RESPECTIVELY, AND THAT BOTH STATES WERE INSISTING ON TAKING THEIR FULL SHARES FROM TARAPUR, WHICH, OF COURSE, WAS THEN OPERATING AT SLIGHTLY LESS THAN ITS RATED CAPACITY. THERE IS NO DOUBT BUT WHAT ALL GENERATOR SYSTEMS IN WESTERN INDIA ARE CURRENTLY BEING CALLED UPON TO DO THEIR BEST IN VIEW OF THE SHORTAGES THAT ARE CAUSING CUTBACKS IN INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION.

B. IN RESPONDING TO QUERIES ABOUT THE CURRENT USE OF TARAPUR POWER, J.C. SHAH MENTIONED THIS MORNING THAT HE HAD JUST INFORMED HIS AMERICAN FUEL SUPPLIER THAT UNLESS A NEW SUPPLY OF FUEL IS ON HAND BY END OF MARCH, TARAPUR OUTPUT WILL HAVE TO BE CUT BACK FURTHER AND THE POWER SHORTAGE WHICH IS BECOMING ACUTE HERE NOW WILL BE PROGRESSIVELY WORSENER. THIS ISSUE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY HIT THE PRESS SOON AND THE UNITED STATES IS QUITE LIKELY TO GET THE LION'S SHARE OF THE BLAME FOR THE ELECTRICITY SHORTAGE THAT ANTEDATES THE FUEL SUPPLY PROBLEM AT TARAPUR.
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